(b) and (c) Indian coal, by virtue of drift origin, has high ash content and reserves of low ash content coking coal and non-coking coal is very limited in the Country and therefore, there is shortage of coking coal and low ash thermal coal which has to be imported.

Haphazard mining in Meghalaya

2888. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the town Ladrymbai in Meghalaya is sitting on a rabbit warren of crisscrossing tunnels due to haphazard mining in the town;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the absence of a developmental plan, supportive infrastructure, knowledge and skills, communities here have engaged in uncontrolled gouging of the earth; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to prevent the social disruption and environmental devastation at Ladrymbai in Meghalaya?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Preference to big companies

2889. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:
SHRI AJAY MAROO:

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would extend preferential treatment to big firms in the matter of allotment of captive coal mines;

(b) if so, the details of the policy;

(c) the reasons for deliberately being harsh to small units therefor;

(d) whether a preferential policy would create monopolies, which are sustained by Government owned mines; and

(e) the steps proposed to review the policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL (DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) In allocation of coal blocks, the Government